

Vice-Mayor Joe Martin called a meeting of the Sterling City Council to order at 6:30 pm on Monday, October 7, 2013. Roll call. Present: Aldermen Barry Cox, Retha Elston, Christopher Schuchard, Lou Sotelo, and John Stauter. Absent: Mayor Charles "Skip" Lee.

Also present were City Attorney Ron Coplan, City Manager Scott Shumard, Assistant to the City Manager Hadley Skeffington-Vos, Building and Zoning Superintendent Amanda Schmidt, Fire Chief Gary Cook, Police Chief Ron Potthoff, and City Clerk Marie Rombouts.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Vice-Mayor Martin asked for a moment of silence to remember Dr. Joseph Gaziano who passed away. Dr. Gaziano had served on the hospital board.

Vice-Mayor Martin announced that Alderman Elston is a new grandma of a baby boy, Isaac Lee, born today at 8:07 am, 9 pounds 11 ounces, 20-1/2" long.

There was no communication from Visitors.

Alderman Cox made a motion to approve the items on the Consent Agenda, as follows:

- A) City Council Minutes of September 16, 2013
- B) Bills and Payroll totaling \$1,502,075.89
- C) Change Order #7 for City Hall remodeling project in the amount of \$24,955.14
- D) Change Order #8 for City Hall remodeling project in the amount of \$39,916.33
- E) Change Order #9 for City Hall remodeling project in the amount of \$7,977.10
- F) Partial Pay Request #16 for Sjostrom and Sons for City Hall remodeling in the amount of \$117,971.90
- G) Plan Commission minutes of June 20, 2013
- H) Partial Pay Request #1 to Twin City Construction in the amount of \$56,110.12 for 2013 Streets Project Contract#2
- I) Partial Pay Request #3 to Martin & Company excavating in the amount of \$87,020.92 for 2013 Streets Project Contract #1

The motion was seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Manager Shumard presented Assistant Hadley Skeffington-Vos with a plaque for "Excellence in Service". Hadley joined the City on May 31, 2011. She is a self-starter. Last Friday Hadley coordinated Government Day with Sterling High School. Hadley has completed many projects in her two years with the City updating the City's website through grants she obtained, movies at Grandon, Tree City USA, and overseeing the remodeling at the Sterling Theater. In addition to work accomplishments, Hadley has

been an assistant cross-country track coach, a mentor in the Big Brother/Big Sister Program and a member on the YWCA board. She has set a new standard for an intern. Shumard admitted that he will miss having that go-to person to dump projects on. Hadley has accepted a position as Assistant Village Manager for Niles.

Vice-Mayor Martin, on behalf of Mayor Lee and the Council, thanked Hadley for what she has done for the City and wished her the best of luck.

Alderman Elston made a motion to approve Mayor Lee's recommendation to reappoint Alfred Segneri to the Property Maintenance Code Appeals Board with a term ending June 30, 2015; seconded by Alderman Sotelo. Voting: Ayes – Alderman Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Sotelo made a motion to approve the Proclamation designating October 6 to 12, 2013 as Fire Prevention Week; seconded by Alderman Cox. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried. Vice-Mayor Martin read the proclamation into the record. Chief Cook stated that this week reminds everyone of things we should practice every day.

Alderman Sotelo made a motion to accept the April 30, 2013 Audited Financial Statements and place them on file; seconded by Alderman Elston.

Joel Hopkins with Hopkins & Associates stated this was the third year his firm has completed the City's audit. Hopkins noted that Finance Director Cindy Von Holten is an asset to the City and was very helpful with the audit. Three independent auditor's reports have been submitted: clean opinion, internal control and compliance, and compliance with Illinois Statutes for TIF Districts. All three reports showed no weaknesses.

Hopkins recommended that the Council review pages 6 through 15 which is the management analysis with a view of the City's standing.

Vice-Mayor Martin thanked Joel Hopkins and Cindy Von Holten for the report.

Voting on accepting the audit: Ayes – Alderman Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Vice-Mayor recommended that the Ordinance Redrawing Ward Boundaries be tabled so that wards do not divide precincts. Alderman Schuchard made a motion to table the ordinance redrawing ward boundaries, seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Cox made a motion to amend the sign code as proposed by Sterling Commons Development; seconded by Alderman Elston.

Alderman Stauter stated the Plan Commission worked on the sign code for two years and going against their recommendation is a slap in the face to those members.

Alderman Sotelo agreed that the Council has historically supported the Plan Commission's recommendations.

Alderman Cox stated that he spoke with Marvin Keys, attorney for the developers. He feels it is unfair to developers to let them lose two tenants over a minor change to the sign code

Marvin Keys stated that he had conversations with the Mayor and tried to call most of the Council members. He explained that Verizon has a right to terminate the contract if they do not get a sign on the end of their building. Kay Jewelers is waiting for the resolution of this matter before they sign a contract. The change does not increase the amount of signage, just locations.

Alderman Cox referred to the sign at Aspen Dental on East Lincolnway. That sign was installed before the sign code update. Signs on two walls of the building does not it offensive.

Alderman Stauter asked where it will stop. What will the request be next month?

Keys admitted that he cannot tell what the next request may be.

Alderman Cox asked if there have been exceptions to the sign code. Manager Shumard acknowledged that St. Mary's School had an exception because they wanted a reader board and they decreased the size of the identifying sign. The purpose of the sign code update was to decrease the size of signage, so the exception was made.

Amanda Schmidt stated that this affects the entire sign code not just this area.

Alderman Cox asked if we can limit this change to this business district. He stated it is our job to develop, pull in taxes, and lighten the load of property taxes.

Amanda Schmidt indicated this would change the whole code. The Plan Commission worked on this for two years and it has been working well for the past year and a half.

Alderman Sotelo understands the value of retail in our community but wants to prevent too much signage and wants to look at the bigger picture, cosmetically.

Alderman Elston asked if this change could be applied to the highway business district only, not the downtown. Manager Shumard stated that it is possible.

Alderman Cox stated that with greater setback requirements in the highway business district, the signs will not be intrusive.

Alderman Elston commended the Plan Commission for their work on the sign code but does not want to lose business.

Vice-Mayor Martin commented that we know what we want to see Sterling become. Maybe the aesthetics are too stringent. We need to keep development.

Alderman Cox amended his motion to change the sign code in the highway business district allowing signage on two sides of a corner building and direct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance; seconded by Alderman Elston. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, and Sotelo. Nays – Alderman Stauter. Motion carried.

Alderman Cox made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement with Willett Hofmann and Associate for engineering services related to the sanitary sewer and lift station improvements at the Hey's Lift Station and East 19<sup>th</sup> Street; seconded by Alderman Stauter. Voting: Ayes – Aldermen Cox, Elston, Martin, Schuchard, Sotelo, and Stauter. Nays – None. Motion carried.

Alderman Stauter thanked Hadley for her outstanding service.

Alderman Schuchard stated that it is nice to see West Second Street open again.

Manager Shumard reported that Aude Foster will be leaving Illinois American Water and expects to meet the new manager soon.

Alderman Sotelo thanked Hadley for her positive energy and what she has done for the City.

Alderman Cox wished Hadley luck and feels that Niles will be a wonderful place for her to grow further.

Alderman Retha thanked Hadley and said she will be missed during movie set-ups.

Vice-Mayor Martin thanked the students for their attention and interest in local government.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Marie Rombouts  
City Clerk